

Tortellini Spinach Soup

In the cold weather, nothing is as satisfying as a nice bowl of soup. Every week I make a big pot of bone broth and I'm always looking for different ways to use it. This recipe is quick and easy, yet good enough to serve to guests. Just ask my neighbors!

INGREDIENTS (serves 6-8)

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 large Vidalia onion, chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 large yukon potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 pound sliced cooked polish sausage
2 quarts chicken bone broth or canned, low-sodium chicken broth
1 pound tortellini
3 cups chopped fresh spinach
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
Toasted crusty baguette slices
Grated Gruyere for garnish

PREPARATION

Heat the olive oil over medium-high heat in a large Dutch oven. Sauté the onions until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for one more minute. Add the potatoes and sausage and sauté until just beginning to brown. Season with salt and pepper, and add the crushed red pepper.

Add the broth, cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, uncovered, until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes.

Add the tortellini and spinach. Simmer for as long as it takes to cook the tortellini as per the box or package instructions.

The tortellini should float to the top when done.

Re-season with salt and pepper if necessary.

Ladle soup into large bowls and garnish with baguette slice, and Gruyere.

Rock Shrimp Fried Rice

Wondering what to do with that leftover white rice that came with your Chinese take out? Don't be so fast to throw it away. You can turn it into a whole new meal. This recipe for shrimp fried rice is quick and easy. I like to use rock shrimp for it because they are smaller than most shrimp and I can get them cleaned and deveined at my local fish market, but you could sub them out for leftover chicken or pork, or if you're a vegetarian, use tofu.

INGREDIENTS (serves 2)

2 tablespoons mirin

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon water

1 teaspoon sugar

4 tablespoons soy sauce

1 clove garlic, minced

1 teaspoon ginger, minced

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound rock shrimp, cleaned and deveined.

2 tablespoons canola oil

1 teaspoon sesame oil

2 cups cooked rice

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 egg beaten

Chinese fried noodles and 2 chopped scallions

PREPARATION

In a small bowl, combine mirin, lemon juice, water, sugar and 2 tablespoons of soy sauce. Whisk until sugar is dissolved. Pour into ZipLoc bag and add rock shrimp. Massage marinade around rock shrimp and put in fridge for 4 – 8 hours.

Place a wok over high heat and add canola and sesame oils. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for one minute until fragrant. Add the rice, 2 tablespoons of soy sauce, one chopped scallion, rock shrimp and marinade. Sauté for 3-4 minutes until the shrimp are pink and cooked through. Make a well in the middle of the rice/shrimp mixture. Pour in the egg and scramble. Combine all together. If too dry, add one tablespoon of water and combine.

Serve in bowls or on a platter and garnish with Chinese fried noodles and remaining chopped scallion.

Sliced Beef Pho

Although I've traveled all across Asian, the best pho I've ever had was in a strip mall in Virginia. Go figure. I've been trying to recapture the delicious flavor of their broth for years, and this recipe comes fairly close.

This recipe requires charring vegetables on top of the stovetop directly on the grate. But I always find that so messy that I like to use my barbecue vegetable grill pan. If you don't have a gas stove, you can broil the vegetables until charred.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1 large vidalia onion, peeled and quartered

1 2-inch knob of fresh ginger
8 cups homemade [turkey bone broth](#)
3 tablespoons fish sauce, plus more to taste
2 star anise
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 pound sirloin steak
salt and pepper
five spice
1 (1-pound) package dried rice vermicelli

FOR GARNISH (all optional)

Bean sprouts
Thai basil
Jalapeño, thinly sliced
Limes, quartered
Chopped cilantro
Fresh scallions, thinly sliced
Fried shallots
Sriracha
Oyster sauce

PREPARATION

Place the onions and ginger on a grill pan directly over a high flame on your cooktop. Cook until charred, turning the vegetable pieces until charred on all sides, about 6 -7 minutes. Set aside to cool. Chop the onions. Cut the ginger into thick slices.

In a large soup pot, add the stock, onions, ginger, fish sauce, star anise and brown sugar. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for one hour.

Generously season the steak with salt, pepper and five spice. Using a grill pan, sear both sides until you have grill marks. It's okay if steak is still very rare, it will continue to cook in broth later. Allow to rest and cool for ten minutes. Thinly slice and set aside.

Cook the rice noodles according to the instructions on the package. Drain and set aside.

Place the garnishes on a platter: bean sprouts, Thai basil, cilantro, jalapeño, limes and scallions. Place the fried shallots in a small bowl. Pour some Sriracha in a small bowl and pour some oyster sauce in another small bowl.

Remove the star anise and as much ginger as possible from the pot. Add in the sliced beef and return soup to a simmer. Adjust seasoning to taste, adding fish sauce, sugar or salt to taste.

Place some rice noodles into large soup bowls. Ladle the soup over the noodles.

Serve accompanied by platter of garnishes. This way people can garnish their soup bowls to their own tastes.

Note: *If there are leftovers, try to keep the rice noodles separate from the soup. The noodles will absorb too much of the broth overnight and get gummy if they are mixed together.*

Citrus Marinated Red Snapper

In an effort to eat a bit healthier, I've been testing out some different combinations of foods. Saying no to meat and pasta is tough, but if you use the right grains and veggies you can at least add some bulk to a meal and not starve yourself.

This red snapper dish with cauliflower and lentils was surprisingly satisfying. Okay, would I have rather had spaghetti carbonara? Yes, but my cardiologist will be glad I made this instead.

INGREDIENTS (serves 2-4)

1 pound red snapper filets
4 tablespoons of olive oil
2 onions, sliced
3 cloves garlic, sliced
1 cup black lentils
1.5 cups mushroom broth or water
1 cup white wine
1 cauliflower (chopped into small pieces)
salt and pepper
zest of one orange for garnish
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped for garnish
seeds of one pomegranate (optional)

MARINADE

2 tablespoons orange juice
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon lime juice
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon ginger, minced
2 tablespoons soy sauce

PREPARATION

In a small bowl, whisk together all of the marinade ingredients. Season the snapper filets with salt and pepper. Gently place the filets in a Ziploc bag. Add the marinade and seal tightly. Allow the marinade to cover the filets and place the bag in the refrigerator for one hour.

In a large skillet over medium-low heat, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. When hot, add the onions and garlic and sauté until they begin to brown, about twenty minutes. Set aside.

Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees. Place a sheet of aluminum foil

over a large baking sheet. Spread out the cauliflower evenly over the aluminum foil. Season with salt and pepper. Generously drizzle 2 tablespoons of olive oil over the cauliflower. Mix with your hands and re-spread out evenly over aluminum foil. Bake for 20 minutes or until the cauliflower begins to brown. Set aside.

In a medium sized saucepan, add one cup of lentils and 1.5 cups of broth and 1 cup of white wine. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer for 20 minutes.

While the lentils are cooking, spread the onions out onto a medium sized baking dish. Gently remove the fish filets from the marinade and lay on top of the onions. Pour the remaining marinade over the fish. Bake for 25 minutes at 400 degrees.

To serve, use a spatula to gently place the onions and fish filets on a platter. Place the lentils on one side of the fish and the cauliflower on the other.

Garnish with orange zest, pomegranate seeds, and parsley.